



# NEWS

A publication of the Jimmy Doolittle Air & Space Museum Foundation

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## Journey to the Center of Vietnam – A Three Part Series

By Major Diana Newlin

The Jimmy Doolittle Air and Space Museum announces its new exhibit, 'Journey to the Center of Vietnam' part I. This exhibit reviews the Vietnam years at Travis from 1960-1975. The exhibit focuses on exploring the Vietnam era, recognizing the struggles of a politically torn America, and the sacrifices of her brave people. To this day many Americans understand little about the history of the Vietnam War and why it is still a painful subject for many of the participants. To educate these people, as well as, to validate the plight of the participants are the bases for the exhibit. The exhibit includes personal accounts of many who lived the Vietnam experience, including some of our very own volunteers. Also recognized are veterans from all branches of the service. Accounts are graphically illustrated by Travis' own Kathy Kruczek and the display begins with a Free Speech Wall in which veterans candidly speak about their dilemmas and their opinions about their own countrymen who condemned them and Vietnam — yet were never held accountable. This wall is fol-

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*Maj Diana Newlin recently visited with John Doolittle, son of Jimmy Doolittle, at the Doolittle Raider's 2002 Reunion.*

## A Visit with History: Raider Reunion 2002

By Major Diana Newlin, Deputy Curator

How could I have ever imagined that a simple request for information would result in an invitation to the Doolittle Raiders' Reunion? It all started with a simple e-mail and ended with one of the most exciting experiences of my life. My good fortune began one day while planning the new Jimmy Doolittle exhibit for the museum. It seemed like a good idea to get some interviews from people who actually knew him. I was led to C.V. Glines, author of many books about Jimmy Doolittle including I Could Never Be So Lucky Again. To my surprise, when I contacted C.V. He told me that the next Raider Reunion would

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Comments and questions about the NEWS may be addressed to Editor, Jimmy Doolittle Air & Space Museum Foundation NEWS, PO Box 1565, Travis AFB, CA 94535

## JIMMY DOOLITTLE AIR AND SPACE MUSEUM Mission Statement

The purpose of the Museum is to portray the history of Travis Air Force Base's contribution to the development of airlift in the Pacific.

It's primary objectives are:

- To provide and maintain an aviation and aerospace, educational, scientific, cultural, historical and inspirational facility for the general public.
- To provide to youth, students and scholars historical research facilities and inspirational exhibits.
- To serve as a meeting place and forum for aerospace oriented organizations and individuals for the benefit of all Northern California.

\* In accordance with AFD 64-1,  
Air Force History and Museum Program.

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Eric Schmidt, Docent



**TAM  
coin  
\$5**

*It's a collector's item now! A few of them are left.  
Brass, red, white & blue...gorgeous!*

Jimmy Doolittle Air & Space Museum

## Gift Shop

Bldg. 80, Burgan Blvd.  
Travis AFB, CA 945635  
(707) 424-4450/5598  
Fax (707) 424-4451

*The Museum Gift Shop  
is now offering **collectors coins**  
for the Travis Air Museum,  
the 60th AW Director Staff  
and the Solano County 150th year  
anniversary. The Solano county  
coins are available in bronze,  
silver, or gold.*

**Volunteers needed.**

## CURATOR'S CORNER



By Gary Leiser

The Museum has been slowly returning to normal after the events of last September. We have returned to our regular hours, but visitors who do not have a military ID must call the Museum for an escort. So far, we have been able to accommodate such visitors, but in the future this will depend on our workload.

You will notice that this issue of the NEWS is larger than usual. This is because circumstances beyond our control prevented us from publishing it during the first quarter. We will be able to publish the same number of pages this year, but they will be allotted to three issues instead of four.

### MUSEUM STAFF

During the first quarter **Major Diana Newlin** returned to the Museum for another stint as an IMA. While absent from the Museum she was deployed to Camp Smith Hawaii under the direction of US Pacific Command. Her outstanding service to that command resulted in the award of the Joint Service Achievement Medal (second oak leaf cluster). Back at Travis, she has been busy completing her display on the War in Vietnam, which is featured in this issue. She has also begun work on a display devoted to Jimmy Doolittle. In April she attended the 60<sup>th</sup> reunion of the Doolittle Raiders in Columbia, SC. More details appear in this issue. **Mark Pollman** and **MSgt Joe Inocencio** were preoccupied with several projects: cleaning up the Museum's storage area and turning in unwanted materials and equipment, coordinating the donation of the cab from the old control tower to the museum, reviewing the inventory, and keeping equipment operational.

Joe and Mark also arranged for the completion of the construction of a new office for the wing historian who is expected to move to the Museum shortly. Joe devoted a lot of attention to developing a new website for the Museum (have a look at [HTTP://www.travis.af.mil/museum](http://www.travis.af.mil/museum)) and coordinating with LG to repaint our C-140, which is at the top of the list of our ugly ducklings. We hope to repaint one aircraft per year so that the collection will be as presentable as possible when the new museum is built. I am delighted to report as well that MSgt Inocencio was named Senior NCO of the quarter and that Mark Pollman will receive a week off for his hard work.

### MUSEUM CEREMONIES

Units on base continue to use the Museum for retirement and promotion ceremonies. In March we hosted the **Air Mobility Command's Biennial History and Museum Conference**, which included an outing to the Western Railway Museum near Rio Vista to compare aircraft restoration with locomotive restoration. Mark Pollman was the point man on this project. Afterwards, I attended the annual **Mutual Concerns of Air and Space Museums Seminar at the National Air and Space Museum** in Washington.

### NEW MUSEUM

Plans for the new museum continue to move forward, albeit somewhat more slowly. The Jimmy Doolittle Air and Space Museum Foundation have hired Campbell & Company, consultants in philanthropy, to conduct a feasibility study for this project. They will interview, and network with, potential donors in order to gauge public support for our project, and then help us harmonize our objectives with the projected support. They will also provide the foundation with a list of people who would be

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## CURATOR'S CORNER CONTINUED

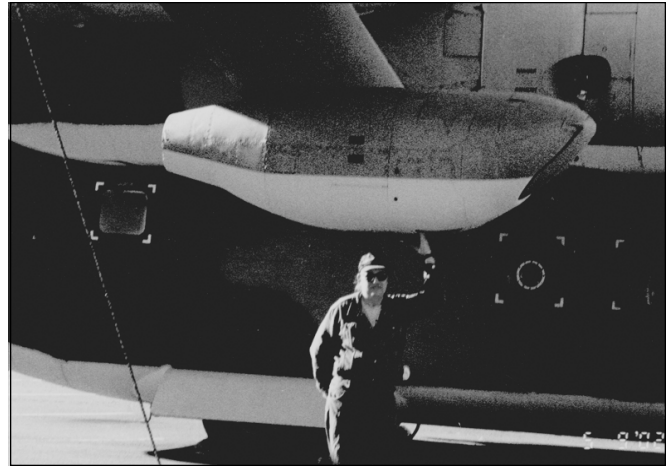


*Carl Bodin with the crushed C-123 pod.*

highly likely to contribute to the new museum. Our immediate goal will then be to raise a few million dollars and use the funds generated by those dollars to hire a full-time fundraising staff.

### NUTS AND BOLTS

As for nuts and bolts, **Carl Bodin** continued his reconstruction of the crushed pod from our C-123. We are sorry to report that he recently moved to the desert wilderness of Nevada, but **Joe Tattersall** completed the project. The pod looks better than new. **Eric Schmidt**, who also gives tours with enthusiasm, bird proofed the C-7, and worked on the windows of the C-123. **Bill Lancaster** worked on the historian's office, built an addition to the display on Vietnam, and cleaned up the carpenter shop. **Ben Reed** took on the daunting task of reorganizing our library, above all our photo archive. Now we can actually find what we are looking for! I am no longer afraid to visit the library. As usual **Jim Martin** monitored all the aircraft, served as chief bird catcher, and repaired a loose hatch on the B-29. **Gary Vostry** directed his wood-working savvy toward both the new Doolittle exhibit and the to Vietnam display, and he has been maintaining our O-2. **Mark Connor**,



*Joe Tattersall with the restored C-123 pod.*

**Charles McManns**, **Ryan Sobeck** and **Bill Santee** also put in many hours on various projects. I am pleased to report that long-time volunteer **Ned Fall** has recovered well from a stroke and dropped by to say hello. I am equally pleased to say that our docent *extraordinaire* **Walter Kane** has recovered from surgery and has come by as well. On the other hand, I regret to report that Walter and Penny have decided to move to Sun Lakes, AZ. Walter's contribution to the Museum since 1991 has been enormous. We owe him a great debt of thanks.

### RECENT DONATIONS

Finally, recent donations to the Museum include a Viet Minh bow, two arrows and propaganda leaflets from Vietnam, a WW II A-2 pilot's jacket with artwork on the back, a beautiful metal factory model of a C-133, and a large model of a KC-10 donated from the flight simulator at McChord AFB. The KC-10 is made of fiberglass and has a wingspan of ten feet. It is a welcome addition to our air-refueling exhibit. Meanwhile, the **Fairfield Host Lions**, among the most loyal local supporters of the museum, presented the Foundation with a check for \$500. The Foundation also received \$2,100 from the **Combined Federal Campaign** for 2001.

## A VISIT WITH HISTORY: RAIDER REUNION 2002 CONTINUED

be in a few weeks. Before I knew it, I was on a plane bound for Columbia, South Carolina and the 60<sup>th</sup> annual Raider Reunion. It all happened so quickly, that after I had gone through all the steps to get there, I hadn't really thought about what would happen once I arrived. It seemed so amazing to actually be able to meet the heroes of WW II, who retaliated against the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor — a truly fateful day in history. That attack had been a surprise all right — almost simultaneously Japan had been in the USA negotiating for peace. And now it has been 60 years since the Japanese military assault and the Doolittle Raid, which occurred months later. Even today the importance of the Raid can never be diminished. Documents later revealed that the Pearl Harbor attack had been planned for months. America was not only caught off-guard but also off-balance. The US military was totally unprepared and had no plans to regain their footing. As the Japanese claimed victories throughout the Pacific, prospects were grim and the dominoes kept falling. Out of desperation, Yankee ingenuity drew upon an idea — almost a suicide mission. Against all odds, they decided to launch an attack on Japanese cities off an aircraft carrier, some distance away from the Japanese mainland. It was considered technically impossible, and the Japanese refused to believe it for years even after they interrogated the Raider POWs, and concluded they were lying. Of course many adjustments had to be made to the planes and the finest and most skilled crews were chosen. They Raiders were all told early on that it was a dangerous mission and only volunteers would be accepted. Then on a stormy April 18, 1942 nothing went

*To me their strong human spirit is what I will remember most about Reunion 2002.*

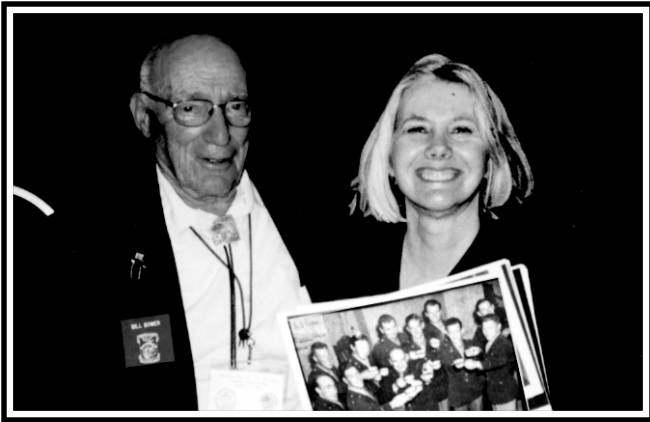
*They had lived so much, seen so much and suffered as well. But through it all they kept on going. They never gave up.*

as planned. Yet despite having to take-off hours early, running out of gas over the ocean, bailing out and crashing planes, they triumphed, turning the course of the war by dealing an important psychological blow. How could their Emperor have been wrong when he promised the Japanese mainland was safe? Japan now panicked and reevaluated their war plans, making adjustments to our advantage.

I knew meeting them was going to be an honor but their attitudes were amazing. They were very humble about their accomplishment, despite enduring many great losses — of lives, health, and freedom. Yet they were witty and full of spirit. It was like going to any club where pilots and their crews were gathered 'round, telling stories and perfecting drinks'. They still had their sense of humor and enjoyed telling jokes as well as stories. They had many stories to tell. After the Raid they went on to China-Burma-India, Germany, different assaults in the Pacific or prison camps. Life hardly stopped following April 18th. To me their strong human spirit is what I will remember most about Reunion 2002. They had lived so much, seen so much and suffered as well. But through it all they kept on going. They never gave up. Can you imagine yourself flying your plane — all warm and comfortable one minute, then the engine chokes on that last swallow of gas? Gathering up your supplies and parachute, you prepare to plunge into the great unknown and of course it is raining. Begging for a glimpse of China, but no beacon lights as promised, knowing if the ocean doesn't get you, the occupied Japanese troops will. Saying good-bye to your plane, it's been a good friend. Saying good-bye to your good friends; hope you'll see them again. For a sec-

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## RAIDER REUNION CONTINUED



*Lt. William M. Bower, co-pilot, 37th Sqdn. and Diana.*

and you ponder about the folly of jumping out of a perfectly good airplane – then in a flash the cold wind bites your face. Parachuting the military way — fast, hard, dangerously — add blindly to that list. You land like a sack of bricks in the dark ocean and you don't know where the shore is. You could swim if you weren't so broken up. Please don't let that arm be broken, but you can't move it. When you finally thrash your way to shore, that's when your real struggle begins. Just before Lt Col James Doolittle bailed out, co-pilot Lt. Tom Cross asked him what were they going to do? He told them they'd splash down near a boat and if it were friendly they'd be all set and if it were the enemy, they'd commandeer the boat and sail home to safety. That's the spirit, the human spirit that I felt when I met these men. Today I received a letter from one of the Raiders. Enclosed was a contribution and a completed member application — our newest member. It's an exciting day for the Jimmy Doolittle Air and Space Foundation. We're excited and so are the Raiders! There'll be more to come from these brave souls in our next issue. And, an exciting announcement will be made regarding Reunion 2003.

## A PAINTING WE WILL GO!



### **SALUTE TO PAINTERS EXTRAORDINAIRE: THANK YOU!**

- *A1C Matthew Reid*
- *SSgt Ansen Moore*
- *SSgt Jeffrey Arnold*
- *MSgt Tirapol Johnson*
- *SSgt Eric Binkey*

**M**embers of the 60 EMS/LGMCE really pitched in at the Jimmy Doolittle Museum and completed the black backdrop for the new “Reach for the Stars” Jimmy Doolittle exhibit and part II of the Vietnam Exhibit. The men pictured here voluntarily offered their services for this important painting project. This is not the first time the Museum has been blessed with their goodwill. Another team also led by SSgt Jeffrey Arnold donated their time to paint part I of the Vietnam Display. Part II of the Vietnam display will be a Welcome Home Mural honoring Vietnam Veterans and their contributions. The new Doolittle display will feature a wax figure of General Jimmy Doolittle standing before the solar system inviting observers to “Reach for the Stars”. Museum attendees will be offered the opportunity to purchase a star with their name inscribed. These stars will become part of the exhibit and the proceeds from the stars will fund the construction of the new museum. We are truly grateful for these volunteers and appreciate their American spirit.

## JOURNEY TO THE CENTER OF VIETNAM CONTINUED



lowed by a mural of Vietnam, painted by artist Heide Couch, depicting the scenery of wartime Southeast Asia and Travis AFB. The mural is intertwined with personal stories from aviators, ground troops, medical staff and civilians involved in the Vietnam experience. The object of the exhibit is to hear the story from those who lived it. Despite betrayal, opposition and riots in the U.S., there are accounts of bravery, triumph and above all camaraderie.

**Carl Bodin**, a Travis volunteer described it like this, *"I know it sounds like a cliché now, but the truth is when you fight a war, when you're involved in battle, you can't help but become a band of brothers. The enemy feels it too in their ranks. When you put your life in another person's hands again and again, it forms a bond of trust. This bond is life long. It's the reason that after so many years, people still come to the Wall searching for those they served with. Then when they find a name, it still releases strong emotions. Even if I met the enemy today, we could still relate. We could relate to this feeling"*.

In the exhibit are displayed the faces of war through the years. The uniforms have changed, but the faces appear the same. They are those of young men, determined to defend their country and forever changed by the experience. The

same can be said for the women who served. Honored on the exhibit are Babylift participants, military women, civilian volunteers and the Vietnam nurses who shared amazing stories.

*"It's unbelievable how these young nurses faced tragedy day in and day out and through it all had to remain strong to offer compassion to the injured and dying. To be spat on and called names upon their return was not the welcome they deserved,"* stated Vietnam veteran Bill Lancaster.

In building the exhibit it became apparent through examining the stories from Pueblo incident, the POWs, the grunts, and numerous others that there were many unsung heroes who never received a word of gratitude from their country. Their contributions demonstrate what now makes this country great and needs to be recognized. Part II of the exhibit will showcase these contributions and offer our appreciation for the sacrifice these people made, so we could be free.

### OUR JOURNEY BEGINS WITH OUR OWN VOLUNTEERS!

**T**ravis' very own contributed greatly to the exhibit with their stories and pictures. Several of our veterans discuss different facets of their Vietnam experience. (TSgt/Ret) **Jimmy Martin** and (SMSgt/Ret) **Bill Lancaster**, active volunteers, not only contributed with stories but Bill also constructed the drywall/canvas for the murals as well as the portable panels surrounding the display. He describes a day in the life of a Caribou cargo plane (C-7A) when it became mired due to a bad landing. The plane takes on human qualities as Lancaster claims, *"the Boo deserved better than that."* But she flew again despite the tribulations! It seems quite often that the equipment does become your long lost friend. It has been noted that some men, after seeing the engines in the

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## JOURNEY TO THE CENTER OF VIETNAM CONTINUED

Museum's Engine Room, walk away with watery eyes. That time was so important in their lives. Bill's story is a great commentary about the men and their equipment.

(SMSgt) **Walter Kane** and (MSgt) **Eric Schmidt** our museum tour docents, both shared their military chronicles offering insight to the events that transpired as well as the mind-set of the period. Eric discusses his experience when his base was targeted one 4<sup>th</sup> of July evening and suffered casualties. One building is completely destroyed, he's knocked out of bed by the blast, yet he walks away without a scratch — then buries the dead the next morning. How capricious life seems and explains Schmidt, *"I was fortunate...seeing the Moving Wall was very emotional for me."*

Walter reviews not only the mindset of Vietnam, but also that of WWII and the Korean War — both of which he participated. It's insightful to read about the approaches of those two periods as compared to those of the Vietnam Era. One thing that stands out is that actors change but the plays are the same. Supporters and protesters are always present dependant on how individuals are affected and upon how each individual chooses to interpret the facts. Everyone must trust someone's opinion as to what was actually happening in each conflict. In the first two wars the majority seemed to side, but in the Vietnam War opinions were split. The sad part to that controversy was the refusal of the masses to believe what the participants had experienced. It's frustrating to have someone display contempt for you when they're thousands of miles away and are relying on information from third parties. Confusion is always present, but it's hard to defend a man that would spit on a nurse. Did peace and love only apply when it was convenient? Fear always elicits strange behavior and

some continue to justify their behavior to this day. Maybe it would just be easier to admit: I was afraid, I was wrong and I'm sorry. Thank you, Vietnam Veterans!

### Two Stories of "The Vietnam Years at Travis 1960–1975

RECOLLECTIONS FROM JIMMY K. MARTIN—

*"How was your day today dear....  
Life was pretty 'shaky'."*

Photo and text from "The Vietnam Years At Travis 1960–1975" exhibit.

- TSgt Jimmy K. Martin (ret) World War II, Korea and Viet Nam Veteran.
- Member of the Travis Museum Restoration Crew 1990-present.



**T**Sgt Jimmy K. Martin was an aircraft mechanic stationed

at Travis AFB from 1957-1966. While at Travis he was flying crew chief on the C-135, worked on the C-133 and the C-124, 'Old Shakey.'

Old Shakey, a powerful aircraft that carried everything from airplanes to missiles to passengers. It was called 'Old Shakey' because it shook, but during those days the C-124 wasn't the only thing shaking — life in general was pretty shakey (shaky).

TSgt Martin describes the daily grind in his own words:

Travis AFB was the hub. We had rotating shifts. Swing (1600 – midnight) Grave (2400 –0800) and the Day shift (0800-1600). It was a 24-hour operation. Travis never closed down. We started out embassy runs authorized by the State Department and we picked up people from embassies all over the world. Civilians, dependents, children, you name it. They would

assign these trips any time without notice so it was difficult to make any personal plans.

A typical trip route would be Travis AFB to Hickam AFB, HI to Clark AFB, Philippines to Tan Son Whut, South Vietnam (got shot at going into this territory) to Bangkok, Thailand to New Delhi, India to Karachi, Pakistan to Bahrain, Saudi Arabia to Tripoli, Libya to Madrid, Spain to Charleston S.C. then back to Travis.

When we flew over Egypt the Cairo control tower informed us, under heavy influence by the Russians, to drop our altitude to 27,500. I laughed and told the captain, "Maybe their missiles couldn't reach any higher!"

The whole trip took about one week and we traveled between once and twice a month. It was tough leaving the family, my wife and three small children. Especially hard on my wife but she proceeded like a real trooper and held down a job too, for several years. Unfortunately these trips finally got to her and she accused me of tomcatting around and divorce was the final outcome.

It was an exciting life because it was a new adventure everyday. Once in the earlier years, President Kennedy planned a big conference in Hawaii. We brought the attendees to Hickam for the conference. Suddenly I'm no longer a mechanic but an airline steward! White shirt and black bow tie — it was different for me — I had never worn one before, but when duty calls! Kennedy arrived later on Air Force One.

The Air Force was my whole life for 23 years and dominated every aspect including my home life — I feel bad about the sacrifices my family made because I was not there. It was an adventure but like everything, sometimes comes with innocent casualties.

I've been proud to serve in the U.S. Military and through three wars, I've learned a lot about life.

#### ERIC SCHMIDT RECALLS—

*"The 4th of July that Really Ended with a Bang!"*

Photos and text from "The Vietnam Years At Travis 1960–1975" exhibit.

- MSgt Eric Schmidt served as a mechanic on B-47E bomber and KC-135A tanker, B-52D-G bomber, EC-47Q reconnaissance and the C-141A.
- Member of the Travis Museum Restoration Crew and Museum Docent 1998-present



It was 1956 in New Hyde Park, New York (on Long Island outside New York City); I was 18 and about to graduate from high school. The country was in a recession and I decided to join the Coast Guard Reserve. But I soon realized what I really wanted to do was work on airplanes. A quick conference with an Air Force recruiter in 1956 changed my life. My mother was a little concerned but then, going into the military was a noble undertaking. It was the 50s. I served for 20 years and would have to say that the most exciting memory of my career had to be a rocket attack at Gunfighter Village, Da Nang, Viet Nam July 4th 1971.

Gunfighter Village was actually a typical Air Force Base and our mission was to monitor the Viet Cong radio transmission via aircraft. Every now and then as soon as a reconnaissance mission landed — direct fire would hit. Flight and ground crews had to clear the field as quickly as possible, no need to explain why.

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## JOURNEY TO THE CENTER OF VIETNAM CONTINUED

The base was standard with a movie theater, mess halls and a BX. But there was one additional feature. It was known as a blast wall and one surrounded each building to prevent incoming ground fire. (There were two calls we all knew “incoming” and “short.” “Incoming” meant incoming air artillery and “short” meant I’m going home!) However the blast wall only protected against ground explosions and couldn’t defend against airbursts — so noted that July 4th.

That night, fireworks would have been inappropriate so I went to bed early. Besides we had fireworks every night in the form of rocket flares, called star shells. They served as nighttime illumination for perimeter security. While engrossed in dreams about home, an extremely loud noise woke me. By an extremely loud noise, imagine what the sound of a 120-mm rocket being fired at you feels like. Believe me no fireworks could ever compare as 3 rockets hit their target in Gunfighter Village. Immediately I was under the bed. I don’t even remember thinking; I actually woke up under the bed. Emergency procedures became instinct, you didn’t question. I grabbed some clothes and ran outside. Within 60 seconds, three barracks had been blown up and burnt to the ground — piles of rubble. These had been large two story World War II style barracks. We searched for survivors, as the barracks were fully occupied. I’m surprised as many got out as did. There were five casualties total which was a blessing considering the barracks housed approximately 40 personnel each. The next day we felt fortunate that we had survived and we all mourned the dead.



*Rocket attack at Gunfighter Village, Da Nang Viet Nam July 4th 1971.*

However being attacked by rocket artillery was not an unusual occurrence. The enemy hit the base on a regular basis. It was a choice, juicy target — lob rockets often enough — you’re bound to hit something. There was always eminent danger.

While that memory is still as vivid as yesterday so is the day it was time to go home. I was yelling “short”, “short” from the rooftops!

Overall I enjoyed many parts of my military career. I was truly challenged, while in the civilian sector, other than law enforcement it’s rare to see these types of challenges.

I do want to add I had it pretty well off compared to the other military personnel who were in the jungle including the Army, Marines and the Air Force guys out in the field. I really felt for those guys. Words can’t express how I feel about those that didn’t make it home. When I saw the Traveling Wall dedicated to the Viet Nam troops, it was very emotional — why not me? I was very fortunate.

Look for Part II of “Journey to the Center of Vietnam” in the next NEWS issue.

## THANK YOU WALTER!

By Gary Leiser

**A**fter serving as a volunteer guide at the Travis Air Museum for twelve years, 1991-2002, Walter Kane has decided to retire once and for all to a warm climate, Sun Lakes, AZ. During his years at the Museum, Walter guided thousands of people (including many VIPs) through our exhibits and described the highlights of the history of aviation and the USAF to more people than anyone on our staff. Indeed, Walter's own remarkable career in the Air Force—as a veteran of WW II, Korea, and Vietnam, among other things (see below)—made him a unique example of “walking history.” He was thus able to give a personal touch to his subject and bring it to life. Furthermore, we at the Museum relied on him as our most important source of instant information on the Air Force and military aircraft. Invariably, our answer to technical question about an obscure airplane would be “Ask Walter.” In addition he contributed to the beautification of the Museum by creating and tending the flower garden at the front of the building. He was also an active fundraiser, encouraging the Fairfield Host Lions to contribute several thousand dollars to the Museum over the years. Altogether, Walter was one of our most active volunteers. We shall miss him and wish him all the best in AZ.

Walter was born to American parents in Sarnia, Ontario on 27 August 1923. At age 18 he enlisted in the US Army Air Corps and was sent to Jefferson Barracks, Missouri for basic training. He then went to Chanute Field, Illinois to attend aircraft mechanic school for six months. Afterwards he received an assignment to Victorville AAF, CA where he worked on T-6s, AT-9s, and AT-17s. Six months later he went to Hobbs, NM to work on B-17s. He was there from August 1942 until November 1943.



*Walter Kane presenting President Mike Peters, Jimmy Doolittle Air and Space Museum Foundation, with a \$500.00 donation from the Fairfield Host Lions.*

From Hobbs he was transferred to Wendover, UT, where he served as crew chief on a B-24. Four months later he shipped out to the UK where he was assigned to station 365 at Halesworth as part of 8th Air Force during WW II. Again he was a crew chief on a B-24. He remained there until November 1944, when he was transferred to Lincoln, NE. After his group was reorganized there, he went to Pyote, TX to work as inspection dock chief on B-29s between March and December 1945. Afterwards he was sent to Mitchell Field, NY, where he served as crew chief on an A-26 for two years. Then he continued to Dow Field, Bangor, Maine, where he performed the same job for two more years. He then returned to Mitchell Field to work on C-46s for six months. Following this he took another assignment abroad, to Tachakawa, Japan to work on C-54s. After only three weeks, he was transferred to Ashiya, Japan where he was a crew chief on a C-47. During this time, his unit, the 21st Troop Carrier Squadron, participated in the Korean War. On a mission to evacuate Marines besieged at the Chosin Reservoir, his aircraft was shot down behind enemy lines. Nevertheless, he and the crew of his aircraft managed to get the wounded marines on board back to American lines. For

*continued on page 12*

## WALTER KANE CONTINUED

this action all members of the crew received the Bonze Star. After returning from Korea, he was assigned to Clark Field in the Philippines from 1950 to 1952, again with A-26s. From there he went to Langley Field, VA to look after F-84Fs. He was stationed there for three years and then went to Selfridge AFB, Michigan where he worked in field maintenance. He subsequently took a post at Daharan, Saudi Arabia. He was there for a year in charge of transient alert. Afterwards he went to Ramstein, HQ 17th AF to serve in the support squadron branch. Fourteen months later he moved to Wiesbaden, HQ USAFE to work in the same capacity. Then from July 1965 to July 1969 he was assigned to Hamilton AFB, CA, 4<sup>th</sup> AF, again in the support aircraft branch. At the end of that tour he retired from the Air Force. From 1969 to 1985 he worked for the Social Security Administration in Richmond, CA. Then in 1991 he began his real working life as a volunteer at the Travis Air Museum.

## WELCOME VOLUNTEERS

**T**he Museum is happy to welcome aboard two new volunteers. The first hail goes to **Gary Vostry**. Gary is our resident pharmacist and volunteers at the pharmacy as well. He has already constructed the stands for the mini-timelines for the Vietnam Wall and is currently spearheading construction on the bamboo holders for the larger timelines. Our second hail goes to **Cameron Kehler** of the Weather Flight in the 60<sup>th</sup> Operational Support Squadron, OSS/OSW. Cameron has been volunteering on week-ends and is currently completing a project for the new Jimmy Doolittle Wall. Welcome aboard new volunteers! We appreciate your support!

## A RECOLLECTION OF KOREA



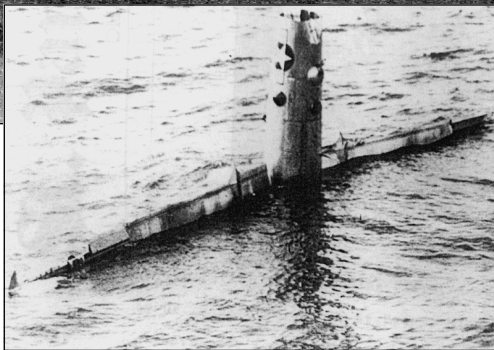
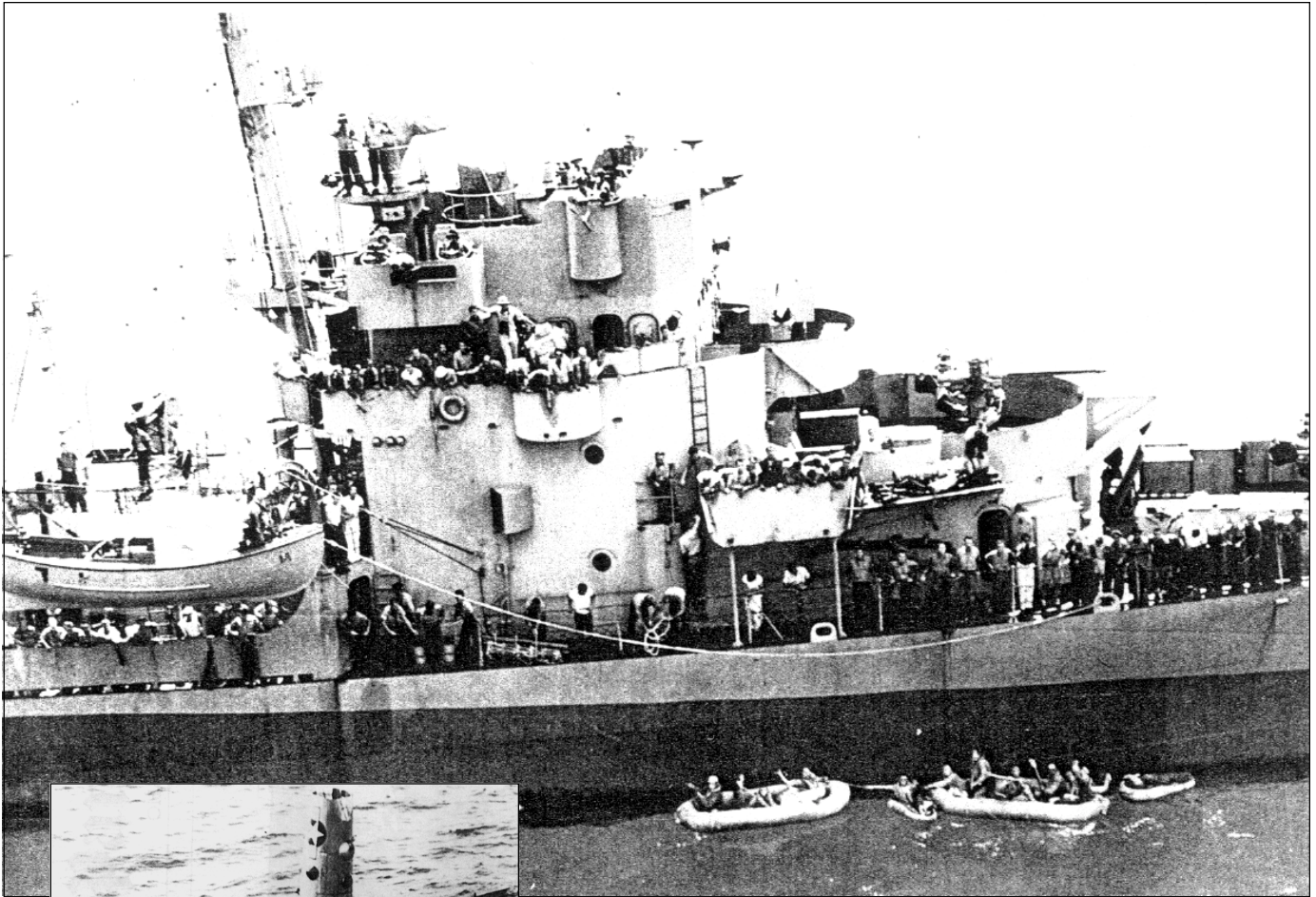
By Harry Ahlman

**I** arrived in Korea in early October, 1952, in the midst of the war. I was attached to a C-47 squadron and flew almost every day. I had little free time, barely enough to write letters home to Wisconsin. In those letters I frequently described the Korean children and their desperate need for clothing, especially warm clothing and shoes. I estimated that a ten-year old Korean could wear the clothes of a six-year old American. Hand-me-downs would be prized. Several months went by. I became preoccupied with other matters and stopped writing about clothing.

In the spring of 1953, after returning from a flight, I was told to report to the base chaplain as soon as possible. A chill went through me, for I thought that a family member had died. Prepared for the worst, I rushed to the chaplain's office. When I entered, he told me to sit down and then asked "What do you plan to do with everything that has been sent to Korea in your name?" I had no idea what he was talking about. Noticing that I looked puzzled, he added "a boxcar full of children's clothing has arrived with your name on it."

I was both surprised and delighted. My base was then supporting an orphanage. The number of children there had grown from six to ninety-six. The clothing, which had been collected by the churches in Wausau, Wisconsin, was immediately put to good use.

## CRAPPED OUT, PART II



*Above: Crew 21 alongside the USS Doherty. Taken from a PBY.*

*Left: St. Paul Pioneer Press, June 6, 1945: Photo of the Superfortress sinking into the ocean southwest of Guam on May 15, after being forced down on a mission in the Central Pacific.*

## Crapped Out

By Dr. Vic Durrance

PART 2 *(conclusion of the story in the previous issue)*

We were barely floating, but I managed to paddle both of us around the right wing tip and to the partially submerged nose of the aircraft. By this time, Bates and Senger had deployed the two eight-man rafts that were stored in the fuselage. No sooner did I get the left gunner, Harrison, in one of the rafts than I heard the right gunner, Harris, screaming, "Come get me somebody!" He was in his seat pack raft and was drifting rapidly away from the rest of us. He soon disappeared in the heaving sea. The navigator, Bates, and I lashed both rafts together as the rest of the men climbed aboard. A quick check revealed that central fire control gunner, Stanton, and the radar officer were missing. The radio operator, Conley, mentioned that he last saw

## CRAPPED OUT CONTINUED

him holding onto the left wing, apparently suffering from serious injuries. Someone else said he saw Stanton floating face down near the wreckage.

As the swells increased, the lashings that held the rafts together pulled loose, causing one raft to deflate. I thought I might be able to remain in the partly deflated raft because I was the smallest member of the crew. As this raft began to sink, however, I quickly joined the others. We were now ten men, one of whom was badly burned, in a single raft. Harrison, who was injured, was placed at one end of the raft. The rest of us were tightly jammed together in the remaining space. Because of the ingestion of salt water, most of us began to throw up the mutton sandwiches that hunger had driven us to eat earlier. Some men managed to vomit over the side, but the others simply did so where they sat.

It soon became obvious that Harrison, as he groaned and tried to move, was in agony. Conley and I crawled over several sodden bodies without hearing any protest and administered two shots of morphine through his flight suit, for one shot seemed to have little effect. Harrison calmed down somewhat, but then began to talk irrationally and tried to sit up. We thought it best to try to keep him still, because we did not know the extent of his injuries. I sat next to him and tried to calm him down, but with little success.

Darkness soon arrived and the waves seemed to become even higher. Because of the number of men and water in the raft, we were barely floating. I knew that if we turned over in the increasingly rough sea, Harrison would certainly drown. I held tightly to his flight suit with one hand and with the other gripped the raft. I remained so all night. At one point during the

night the raft seemed to be nudged and pushed rather sharply from below. We never knew what caused this and were too terrified to even speculate.

Another time during the night, the captain, Senger, suddenly shouted, "Brooks!" We heard an answer, "Here." And Harris paddled in from the darkness and tied his little raft to our large one. He had drifted out of sight soon after we ditched. We never knew what possessed Senger to cry out. It was pure chance Harris heard him.

The next morning found us a sorry looking lot. I tried to let loose of Harrison, but I couldn't move my fingers. Bates finally pried my fingers loose one by one. I was sure he was breaking every one, but that was not the case and feeling soon returned to them all. Harrison awoke and seemed rational. He said he felt fine but was numb from the waist down. I crawled over to him and unzipped his flight suit to check him. As his suit was opened to his waist, his swollen scrotum suddenly spilled out. It seemed as large as a soccer ball. He also had a chunk of bone missing from his shin about mid-calf. Later we surmised that he had been hit in the pelvic area by the auxiliary power unit, which crushed his pelvis. He needed immediate medical attention.

Both rafts should have contained food, water and medical supplies. But we found only three pints of water. Someone had stolen everything else from the rafts.

Bates estimated that we were drifting toward the Philippines at a fairly rapid pace and said we should not worry because "land was just a few miles away." Then with a strait face he added, "Straight down." Some of us would have been glad to help him get wet, but we were too exhausted to move. In retrospect it was a funny

remark and did relieve some of the tension. Even today we chuckle about it.

In the middle of the afternoon of the second day, we heard the sound of aircraft engines and soon three aircraft from our squadron came over us low and fast. Shortly thereafter, a PBY appeared and dropped several packages that skipped over the water so close to us that we signaled to the aircraft to stop the dropping. It flew over us again very low and disappeared in the distance.

Several hours later, the mast of a ship loomed over the horizon.

Was it ours or a Jap? Several crews who had ditched on previous missions had been picked up by the Japanese Navy. With some difficulty, we loaded our .45 side arms and prepared "to repel boarders," which of course sounds ridiculous today. Soon the USS Doherty came alongside and took us aboard amid much cheering by its crew. We later learned that the Doherty had been in Alaskan waters before reporting to Guam. There it had picked up a number of downed flyers, but they had all frozen to death.

Aboard the Doherty we were treated like fleet admirals. Its crew did everything they could to make us comfortable. We were escorted to the head of the chow line, fed ice cream, and offered the best bunks. Harrison was taken to sick back and packed in ice in an effort to reduce the swelling of his scrotum. He was soon out of pain, although he mentioned that he was a bit cold on his bottom. I will never forget the kindness, concern and friendliness that we received from the wonderful men of the Doherty.



*Crew 21 being picked up by USS Doherty. From left to right: Sgt. Vic Durrance/white hat, Lt. Garvin Kowalke/pilot, Capt. William Senger/AC, Sgt. Neal Conley/RO, Lt. Ed Bates/navigator, Cpl. Brooks Harris/RG in small raft, Sgt. Robert P. Harrison/LG in other raft with foot up.*

The captain of the Doherty decided to sink our floating airplane because it might become a hazard to navigation. When the gunnery officer gave the order to fire, every gun on the ship cut loose. Machine guns, 20mm cannons, 40

mm cannons and 3 inch cannons all began firing at the same time. What a racket!!! We later learned that this was the first time the Doherty had fired at a real target, hence the enthusiasm and the heavy volume of fire. Late at night on the 15th or 16th of May, the Doherty deposited us dockside on Guam.

Mortally wounded, old 773 did her best to get us as close to Guam as possible, which allowed us to be rescued by the Doherty. Then she finally "Crapped Out."

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***Operation Homecoming, 1973***

***Travis AFB, CA ....Crowds wait to welcome returning prisoners of War.***